

Research on the Feasibility of Promoting Happy Gymnastics into the Campus with the Structural Reform of the Sports Supply Side

Zhou Maiqing

*School of Physical Education, Taishan University, Shandong, Tai'an, 271000, China
zhoumaiqing@126.com*

Abstract: *By using the method of literature, investigation, and on-the-spot interview, this paper has carried out a detailed analysis and discussion on the current gymnastics development which has encountered confusion and puts forward the ideas of happiness gymnastics in the campus is the best way. To make happy gymnastics enter the campus smoothly, based on the classical theory of "supply-side Structure Reform", the paper makes clear the composition factors of sports supply-side structure, and expounds in detail the feasibility of promoting happy gymnastics into the campus, to realize the balance of supply and demand of campus happy gymnastics, the aim is to change and perfect the training mode of gymnastic talents in China, to let gymnastics return to campus, to strengthen students' physique, and to broaden the selection base of gymnastic talents in China.*

Keywords: *Happy gymnastics; Supply-side; Demand-side; Campus sports*

1. Introduction

Happy gymnastics is proposed in the historical background of the weak foundation of gymnastics in our country, the low proportion of people participating in gymnastics activities and training, and the lack of reserve talents in competitive gymnastics. It is advocated and promoted by the General Administration of Sport of China from the strategic height of building a healthy China and developing a strong sports nation. The concept advocated by Happy Gymnastics is to allow children to enjoy gymnastics exercises and play happily, without pursuing competitiveness like competitive gymnastics. Its teaching content emphasizes fun and entertainment; its teaching methods reflect flexibility and diversity; its exercise process emphasizes gamification and self-awareness; its equipment ensures safety and diversity; and its teaching results are people-oriented, diverse, and tailored to individual abilities.^[1]

Once proposed, happy gymnastics has been widely recognized by the public, and people no longer consider learning gymnastics as a professional matter. It has changed the previous perception of learning gymnastics as "hard, difficult, dangerous," or unattainable, and started to re-examine gymnastics from a new perspective.

Happy Gymnastics draws on successful experiences from developed countries such as the United States and Japan and combines with China's national conditions. Launched in 2014, the true connotation of "happy gymnastics" is not divergent from competitive gymnastics, but it serves as the foundation of the pyramid. By reducing the difficulty of movements, diluting competitiveness, and maintaining fitness, the aim is to change people's traditional views of gymnastics through new models and concepts, while enhancing the physical fitness of children and expanding the base of gymnastics participants, providing new ideas and approaches for the training of reserve talents in competitive gymnastics. In recent years, it has to some extent broadened the base of participants in gymnastics, but it is still a "new project." Like the development of other things, perfection needs to go through a fairly long process, and there are inevitably some problems and confusion in the development process.

2. Re-analysis of the historical background of Happy Gymnastics

As the "founder of sports," gymnastics has an incomparable role in enhancing students' physical fitness, shaping the perfect body, improving body flexibility, coordination, and spatial balance ability, among other sports. From the 1950s to the early 1980s, gymnastics occupied a very important position in physical education teaching in our country's schools and was highly favored by teachers and students.

However, in 1982, with the promulgation of the new "National Physical Exercise Standards," the requirement for the compulsory testing of gymnastic movements was canceled. Subsequently, colleges and universities also abolished the system of comprehensive gymnastic examinations for students, a move that greatly affected the development trend of campus competitive gymnastics and directly led to a sharp decrease in gymnastics participation in our country.^[2] The issuance of the "Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the Reform of the Educational System" in 1985 ushered in a wave of school education reform in China, giving rise to many new ideas and concepts, such as "Happy Physical Education," "Successful Physical Education," "Physical Education and Health," and "Physical Education for Leisure and Entertainment,"^[3] stimulating the enthusiasm of physical education workers for the reform of physical education. Due to an overly one-sided understanding of the policy, sports projects with danger and high difficulty, such as gymnastics, were overlooked, resulting in a sustained decline in their status in school physical education teaching.

At present, the dilemma faced by gymnastics in our country's teaching: on the one hand, the development of gymnastics in school physical education is extremely difficult, with many schools artificially reducing or even canceling gymnastics classes due to factors such as funding, faculty, facilities, equipment, and the risks borne by gymnastics teachers in the teaching process; on the other hand, gymnastics is gradually being replaced by its derivative projects, such as aerobics, and sports dance, because most students in school prefer to participate in "three-no" (i.e., low-intensity, low difficulty, non-competitive) physical education projects that are more in line with the times. In terms of competitive gymnastics, as an advantage project in the Olympic Glory Plan, it has been declining year by year. The strongest evidence is the 2016 Rio Olympics, where the Chinese gymnastics team only won 2 bronze medals in the men's and women's team events, with no one competing for individual awards, marking the worst Olympic performance since 1984.^[4] The lag in the development of mass gymnastics has directly led to the interruption of the training of reserve talents for competitive gymnastics and the continuous decline in the physical fitness of young people in our country. The development of competitive gymnastics in our country is characterized by a "narrow" and "no succession" situation, which must attract extensive attention from the national sports management authorities, education decision-making departments, and all sectors of society. Against this background, the General Administration of Sport Gymnastics Sports Management Center proposed the development of the "Happy Gymnastics" project in 2014.

3. Current Situation of Happy Gymnastics Development

In April 2014, the Gymnastics Sports Management Center of the General Administration of Sport held the first National Symposium on the Promotion of Happy Gymnastics, marking the beginning of the development of Happy Gymnastics in China. On December 25 of the same year, the first Happy Gymnastics Competition was held in Guangzhou, with 40 representative teams from 12 provinces, municipalities, and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region participating. At the same time, the Gymnastics Management Center also issued the "National Happy Gymnastics Level Exercise Standards". According to incomplete statistics, from 2014 to 2018, the National Gymnastics Center held 13 training courses for Happy Gymnastics coaches and judges and has successively developed a series of teaching and competition regulations, including textbooks, competition rules, coach certification standards, and club construction standards. In recent years, more than 40 gymnastics competitions at all levels have been held, with nearly 800 participating teams and over 10,000 participants. The number of Happy Gymnastics clubs (teaching centers) has increased from 25 in 2016 to over 100, and the Gymnastics Management Center has listed 73 kindergartens, primary and secondary schools as pilot schools for Happy Gymnastics, as well as 7 pilot provinces and municipalities for Happy Gymnastics. All these works are steadily progressing and continuously improving. The Happy Gymnastics movement in China has flourished, to a certain extent, expanding the base of participants in gymnastics. However, there are still some issues in the process of promoting Happy Gymnastics. To achieve the comprehensive development and popularization of Happy Gymnastics, we still need to carefully consider and explore the best path for its realization.^[5]

4. The bottleneck that hinders the development of happy gymnastics in China

4.1. The Club Nature of Socialization Makes it Difficult to Popularize Happy Gymnastics

Gymnastics clubs are no longer a new product. In countries such as Japan and the United States, they

have already reached a large scale and substantial number, with Japan having more than 2,000 clubs and the United States having more than 4,000. The number of people practicing gymnastics is as many as 5.2 million. In China, however, the number of happy gymnastics clubs is currently less than 200 and is basically in the early stages of development. Foreign gymnastic clubs offer different levels of gymnastic courses tailored to the skills, age, and gender of the participants, including popular gymnastics courses for children, teenagers, and even adults - allowing participants to effectively improve and enhance their physical fitness in a safe and fun environment. The popularization of gymnastics in China is far from reaching the levels of developed countries. The marketing model of clubs is limited to the traditional paid sales model of fitness clubs, with training styles mostly remaining rigid and aimed only at children aged 3-12.^[6] The population of gymnastics consumers is very limited and cannot meet the diverse needs of society. Furthermore, most Chinese children spend most of their time studying at school and have limited contact with happy gymnastics. They can only participate in club activities during weekends or holidays. If a limited number of clubs are crowded at the same time, it is difficult to meet the needs of the public, which goes against the original intention of the development of happy gymnastics. Wang Hongjie, the Director of the Gymnastics Sports Management Center, clearly stated, "The most important original intention of launching the concept of happy gymnastics is to let gymnastics return to the essence of sports, allowing everyone to participate, rather than thinking of gymnastics as a competition for gold and silver. The main aim is to dig up more talent identify the future reserves and establish a solid foundation for the 'National Team system'."

4.2. The Imbalance of Regional Economic Development Restricts the Expansion of Happy Gymnastics

Happy Gymnastics is mainly organized under the leadership of the General Administration of Sports of China, hosting events, training, and promotional activities in the form of clubs, and promoting them through provincial and municipal-level competitions and commercial routes. Clubs are mainly concentrated in economically developed major cities in China, such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou. There are few in underdeveloped areas, and they are even rarer in towns and rural areas. The specific teaching content and business model depend on the economic conditions of different areas. The fixed locations, specialized equipment, and high requirements of happy gymnastics result in a high level of consumption. According to field surveys, the cost of a single class at some clubs is no less than 200 yuan, and even higher. Many families are unwilling to bear the cost of their children practicing happy gymnastics. Social clubs are not non-profit organizations, but paid training institutions, resulting in a contradiction between paid services and insufficient consumption capacity. Relying solely on club and provincial-level competition models for commercial promotion is far from enough to promote and popularize happy gymnastics nationally. Ye Zhennan, the head of the national gymnastics team, pointed out: "The best way to solve the problem of insufficient reserves of the Chinese gymnastics team is to introduce gymnastics into schools, allowing more children to engage in gymnastics and have time to engage in gymnastics, thereby raising it to a competitive level."

4.3. The Lack of Systematic and Comprehensive Gymnastics Courses in Schools Hinders the Introduction of Happy Gymnastics into Campus

The teaching and practical activities for the introduction of happy gymnastics into schools require scientific theories to guide them. In terms of promoting happy gymnastics, relevant experts and scholars are working on developing teaching references and materials, such as "Happy Gymnastics in Kindergarten" edited by Chen Guanghui and Jiang Qing in 2016, "Guidelines for Teaching Happy Gymnastics" compiled by Cai Yujun and Gao Xibin in 2017, and "Happy Gymnastics" developed by the Office of the Department of Physical Education in Beijing Sports University in 2018. These materials have a certain guiding significance for teaching happy gymnastics, but they mainly focus on children aged 3-12. Happy gymnastics emphasizes starting early, allowing children to learn corresponding movement skills during sensitive periods of physical development, with undeniable positive effects. However, this group of children is limited to primary school and preschool kindergarten, accounting for only 1/3 of the student population. There is a lack of specific content at middle and high school levels, which are also important for students' physical and mental development. As a result, the implementation of happy gymnastics in different student stages might fall short without the necessary supporting teaching content, demonstrating a lack of completeness and systematizations in school gymnastics courses. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct more research on introducing happy gymnastics into schools.^[7]

5. Analysis of the Theory of Structural Reform of Sports Supply Side

On November 10, 2015, General Secretary first proposed the development concept of "supply-side reform" at the 11th meeting of the Central Financial and Economic Leading Group,^[8] The basic connotation of this concept is to take the improvement of effective supply as the starting point, strive to improve the quality and efficiency of supply, enhance the adaptability and flexibility of supply structure to changes in demand, and make the supply system better adapt to changes in demand structure. To achieve the popularization and promotion of happy gymnastics as soon as possible, the best way is to introduce happy gymnastics into schools, but it is necessary to do various work in the aspect of supply-side structure. In comparison with the economic field, the structural reform of the sports supply side elaborated in this article is based on the demand side – that is, the needs of students at different stages of education (primary, middle, and high school students) for physical and mental development. It aims to provide effective sports supply in response to students' demand for happy gymnastics, to improve the quality and efficiency of supply. Based on interviews with relevant experts and scholars, it is now clear that the structural factors of the sports supply side should include the following main elements (as shown in Figure 1): national educational authorities, schools of all levels and types, teaching staff, and financial investment. This article will analyze the four main factors of the sports supply side structure and propose rational reform suggestions and strategies for the introduction of happy gymnastics into schools.

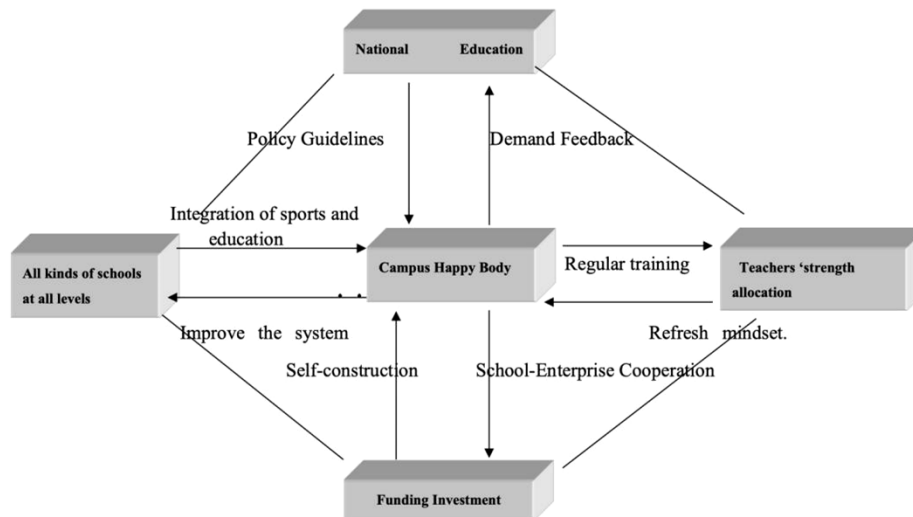


Figure.1 Campus Happy Gymnastics - Schematic diagram of the structure of the sports supply side

6. Feasibility Analysis of Promoting Happy Gymnastics to Enter the Campus Under the Supply-Side Structural Reform

6.1. National education authorities under the supply-side reform

6.1.1. Increase the promotion of happy gymnastics from top to bottom to promote the entry of happy gymnastics into campuses

It is currently difficult to meet the needs of most students in schools relying on the nature of social clubs. To better and faster promote the development of happy gymnastics, the sports bureau should combine with the education authorities, so that happy gymnastics can enter the campuses like football, allowing more students to enjoy the benefits of happy gymnastics. In September 2020, the Ministry of Education and the General Administration of Sport jointly issued the "Notice on Deepening the Integration of Sports and Education to Promote the Healthy Development of Adolescents." An important point is to bring the training of competitive sports talent back to the campus,^[9] changing the traditional single "three-level training network" training model in China, which provides policy guidance for the entry of happy gymnastics into campuses. Under the guidance of national macro policies, the Gymnastics Management Center should learn from the "National Implementation Plan for Youth Campus Football Activities," rely on the Ministry of Education, issue relevant documents and policies related to campus happy gymnastics, increase the promotion of happy gymnastics in schools, and allow more teachers and students to understand and be exposed to happy gymnastics,^[10] enabling the development of happy

gymnastics in primary and secondary schools, and even in universities, to quickly become a part of the school's physical education curriculum.

6.1.2. Deepen the integration of sports and education and establish a cooperative training model for clubs + campus happy gymnastics

The Gymnastics Management Center should work together with the education department to be the strong backing and strong guarantee for the success of campus happy gymnastics, which must also be based on the integration of sports and education, strictly following the rules of educational and training science, and establishing an innovative model of collaborative education and gymnastics in campuses. The social nature of happy gymnastics clubs can provide schools with teaching venues, standardized equipment, and guidance from professional coaches, allowing children with gymnastics potential to develop into club members, and strengthen their training to become professional gymnasts, thus promoting happy gymnastics clubs; conversely, schools can obtain professional equipment and training guidance from coaches in collaboration with clubs. Even if students cannot become gymnastics seedlings, they can benefit from physical fitness by studying happy gymnastics and making it a lifelong sporting hobby. Advocated by government departments, a bridge is built between school sports and social sports organizations, establishing a collaborative system for the development of happy gymnastics at schools with lateral cooperation and vertical, multi-dimensional cooperation between the government, schools, and social clubs, forming a new model for the training of gymnastics talent in cooperation with the government, schools, and social clubs.

6.2. School supply-side reform: Scientifically set up integrated happy gymnastics courses to form a bottom-up teaching and training model

This article refers to various levels of schools including primary, secondary, and nursery schools, with a broad scope covering students at different school levels and age characteristics. The Happy Gymnastics program content system mainly targets young children in the preschool and elementary school stages, while it lacks happy Gymnastics teaching content for middle school, high school, and university students. The Ministry of Education and the General Administration of Sport should gather related experts and professors in education, physiology, psychology, and gymnastics to establish a complete happy gymnastics course system and develop happy gymnastics curricula for different school stages, exercise standards, teaching guidelines, specific teaching content-related materials, and textbooks, to achieve an integrated happy gymnastics course. An expanded basis for physical education will naturally produce highly talented athletes.

Renowned basketball player Yao Ming said, "Sports talents are not directly cultivated, but go through the process of being discovered and nurtured first." It is best to start with popularizing the pre-school and elementary school stages of happy gymnastics, and then gradually introduce it to the middle school, high school, and university levels, forming a teaching model from bottom to top. For example, in February 2016, China's first "Gymnastics Promotion and Practice Base" jointly built by the General Administration of Sport, local universities, and education departments was held at the Rose Primary School in Dancheng District. The best way to connect is to also set up school happy gymnastics demonstration sites in the middle and high school stages, greatly increase the number of pilot projects, promote progress through pilots, and establish a happy gymnastics club at the university stage that students love, enabling happy gymnastics to be integrated into students' entire physical education career, gradually transforming the original model of training athletes from primary school to university and then to professional teams and leagues.

6.3. Reconfiguration of happy gymnastics teacher resources under the supply-side reform

6.3.1. Fully utilize information technology to strengthen the training of happy gymnastics teachers

Happy gymnastics is different from traditional gymnastics. The success of introducing happy gymnastics to schools largely depends on the teachers. In response to the shortage of teachers trained in Happy Gymnastics, the General Administration of Sport should increase the frequency and scope of training and make full use of contemporary network information technology to conduct online training courses in Happy Gymnastics, allowing physical education teachers to receive training without leaving their homes. Secondly, universities' sports education departments should be fully utilized to encourage teachers and students to participate in training related to happy gymnastics and to serve as teachers, coaches, and referees at pilot schools, to train a qualified team of teachers for the promotion of happy gymnastics in primary and secondary schools. To prevent the phenomenon of working in isolation,

schools should regularly invite gymnastics club coaches, experts, and celebrities to provide practical training to happy gymnastics teachers and coaches, guide happy gymnastics teaching, and work to develop a group of physical education teachers with certain organizational ability and high professional proficiency who are passionate about gymnastics."

6.3.2. Happy gymnastics teachers should be good at seizing the pulse of the times and constantly updating their educational concepts

To constantly strengthen their professional quality, we should guide and encourage happy gymnastics teachers to update educational concepts and make full use of the advantages of today's information technology. Combined with the front line of classroom teaching, using flipped classrooms, MOOC, micro-lecture, and other modern teaching modes and methods. Practicing sports in-depth teaching, diligently exploring students' interest in learning, and promoting their mastery of basic skills, so that students feel that learning gymnastics is a challenging thing, but also something within their reach, to realize the multi-dimensional value of happy gymnastics; To integrate happy gymnastics into physical education classrooms, teachers should adapt gymnastics content to incorporate structural changes, reorganizations, entertainment, and fun into teaching methods, enrich exercise methods, reduce skill difficulty, and realize the transformation of competitive sports to teaching materials, refining the content while considering fundamentals, making students willing and happy to learn, understand, and achieve proficiency in gymnastics.

6.4. Investment in Happy Gymnastics venues and facilities: a supply-side reform involving government support, corporate participation, and campus self-construction.

Happy gymnastics equipment differs significantly from traditional competitive gymnastics equipment, emphasizing safety, colorfulness, and fun. Thus, it is pricey and requires considerable capital investment. The contradiction between insufficient school funding and the need to invest in equipment is evident. For happy gymnastics to enter schools smoothly, the state should provide special funds or allocate funds from the sports lottery public welfare fund for the purchase of "happy gymnastics" equipment and assist in the investment of funds for the construction of happy gymnastics venues and facilities in schools. In addition, drawing on the experiences of European and American countries and in combination with the policy direction of government supply-side reform under China's state-led system, a diverse financing channel involving "government + enterprises + society" should be jointly established, with the government providing support, planning, and guidance, and the sports and education departments coordinating the formulation of relevant policies, while enterprises concentrate funds and equipment to promote the introduction of happy gymnastics into schools.

In this way, school collaboration can introduce sponsorship of happy gymnastics equipment enterprise, to establish a happy gymnastics league system. The senior schools (universities, secondary schools) between each academic year can hold a happy gymnastics performance competition regularly, junior schools also can hold a happy gymnastics family parent-child activities on weekends or holidays etc., provided by the school teachers and referees, equipment manufacturers provide happy gymnastics related facilities, constantly improve the supply of campus happy gymnastics equipment, so that the happy gymnastics movement is always in a virtuous cycle of development.

7. Conclusion

The introduction of rhythmic gymnastics into schools is considered the most effective approach to address the decline in physical fitness among adolescents in recent years, as well as the shortage of potential talents in artistic gymnastics in our country. It represents a crucial step in promoting the holistic development of adolescents through the integration of physical education, contributing to the imperative of building a healthy China and advancing our nation's status as a sports powerhouse. Furthermore, it serves as a robust complement and enhancement to the existing "three-level training network" model in artistic gymnastics.

The successful implementation of rhythmic gymnastics in schools depends on a thorough understanding of the developmental needs of students at different stages. Grounded in the macro guidance of national sports policies, efforts must be directed towards four aspects of restructuring the sports supply side. Only through these measures can rhythmic gymnastics thrive and develop more efficiently within school environments, ensuring a continuous reservoir of potential talents for artistic gymnastics.

Acknowledgements

Funding: Taishan College Teaching Reform and Research Project: Feasibility Study on Promoting Happy Gymnastics into the Campus Based on the Supply-side Structural Reform of Sports (Project No. 201950)

References

- [1] Li Shuai et al. *Research on Rhythmic Gymnastics in China*[J]. *Sports Culture Guide*, 2016-01: 48-51.
- [2] Sun Yiyang. *Current Development and Strategies of Rhythmic Gymnastics in China*[J]. *Chinese Sports Coaches*, 2019.27.03: 78-80.
- [3] Lin Wenge et al. *A Comparative Study on School Gymnastics Education Reform in China and the United States - Also on the Future Development of School Gymnastics Education in China*[J]. *Journal of Shenyang Sports College*, 2010.29.6: 102-105.
- [4] Xu Liren. *A Comparative Study and Enlightenment on the Development of Gymnastics Programs in China and the United States*[J]. *Chinese Sports Coaches*, 2017.25.2: 35-36.
- [5] Xie Chunyu. *Reflection on the Development of Happy Gymnastics in China*[J]. *Sports Science and Technology Literature Bulletin*, 2016.24.06:102-103.
- [6] Fu Yuanjie. *Happy gymnastics is fun and smart - excerpts from an online interview with Wang Tongjie, head of the gymnastics department of the General Administration of Sport*[J]. *China Sports Daily*, 2015-12-25(1).
- [7] *Chinese women's gymnastics is set to soar next year* [EB/OL]. <http://news.163.com/14/1010/05/A862RIFK00014AED.html>.
- [8] *Presided over the eleventh meeting of the Central Leading Group for Finance and Economics* [EB/OL]. [2017-01-25] <http://politics.people.com.cn/n/2015/1110/c1024-27800298.html>.
- [9] *The General Administration of Sport and the Ministry of Education jointly issued the "Opinions on Deepening the Integration of Sports and Education to Promote the Healthy Development of Young People"* [EB/OL]. [finance.eastmoney.com.2020.9.21](http://finance.eastmoney.com/2020.9.21).
- [10] Nie Huanmi. *Research on school gymnastics development based on the development of "Happy Gymnastics"* [J]. *Sports Science and Technology Literature Bulletin*, 2017.25.2:70-72.